

Portraits of the Artist (2014), the final work in the show, was located in a gallery showing 13th- to 19th-century art. A previous version appeared in their 2015 exhibition at the Victoria Mirò Gallery in London, where wall labels gave details of artworks that meant something special to them, becoming part of their personal biography. In Tel Aviv,

the double self-portrait took the form of labels giving their personal details, placed alongside two rectangles painted in a slightly paler color than the bright red walls. The impression was that two works—maybe Old Master portraits—had been removed, leaving empty spaces. With this work, the duo appears to be searching for solutions to two problems: how to make a self-portrait of two artists who work in tandem and whose biographies are almost identical; and how to assess if there is any point in creating self-portraits today, given the obsession with selfies, where with the swipe of a finger a face can be erased and replaced. Ingenious and captivating as this exhibition was, it left the viewer feeling anxious and uneasy about the place of art and the museum in the 21st century. One suspects that this is exactly what the artists wanted.

—Angela Levine

Left: Paul Kos, *Lot's Wife*, 1969. Salt and cattle, documentation of installation at di Rosa. Below: Paul Kos, *Condensation of Yellowstone Park into 64 Square Feet*, 1969/2016. Mud and sulfur, 96 x 96 in.



NAPA, CALIFORNIA

Paul Kos

di Rosa

Paul Kos's career as a major figure of Bay Area Conceptualism began during an extended visit to di Rosa, back when it was still a fledgling vineyard and Rene di Rosa, its owner and founder, was beginning to accumulate what would become the world's largest collection of Northern California art. In 1968, Kos—then 26 and still in graduate school at the San Francisco Art Institute—spent a good part of the summer grafting vines and building sculpture. The last piece he made there—a stack of salt blocks titled *Lot's Wife*—marked a sea change in materials, intention, and content. It was deliberately ephemeral (the resident cows would later lick it into oblivion), used a natural material, and demonstrated an affinity for and engagement with the landscape itself.

Photographs of *Lot's Wife* kicked off this survey, which spanned nearly 40 years of Kos's career and included pieces unseen since their presentation, as well as works familiar from his frequent gallery shows in the Bay Area or his 2003 traveling museum retrospective. Presented in di Rosa's Gatehouse Gallery, "Equilibrium" highlighted Kos's signature version of dynamic balance: between the "nature" of his Wyoming boyhood and the "culture" of his life as an artist and teacher; between the intellectualism of conceptual art and the humorous playfulness that has characterized much of his work; and between the direct experience of the passage of time and its recorded traces. A pioneer of performance-based film and video, Kos exploited what was then a new medium to make work wherever he happened to be—including on the road to and from Wyoming, a trip he took annually for many years. *Roping Boar's Tusk* (1971), for example, features him apparently trying to capture a distant peak with a loop of rope.

One of the most striking works in "Equilibrium" had not been seen since its 1969 debut at Tom Marioni's fabled Museum of Conceptual Art in San Francisco. *Condensation of Yellowstone Park into 64 Square Feet* (1969/2016) consists of an eight-by-eight-foot platform covered with bubbling, sulfur-infused mud, a mesmerizing tour de force that invokes the constant flux of nature. But the piece that most seems to embody Kos's artistic vision might be *Container for an Icicle (or Mind Over Matter)* (1982). This small triangular box made from incense cedar once served as a form-fitting coffin for a single icicle that Kos broke off the roof of his mountain cabin. Resting on the sawdust generated by the box's manufacture, the piece of ice—a donation to an art auction—soon passed from object to idea, leaving only a trace of its shape behind.

When viewed from the distance of time, much conceptual art invokes the same bittersweet reflection—how interesting it would have been to have seen the moment of creation, the object before it dematerialized, or the performance/event that resulted in a photographic/video record. It is a testament to the power of Kos's vision, as well as to his engagement with both place and experience, that the ghosts of his ideas remain both visually and intellectually compelling.

—Maria Porges

WASHINGTON, DC

Jeff Spaulding

Curator's Office

Almost a decade ago, Curator's Office led a conspicuous cultural shift by avoiding DC's usual gallery locations of Georgetown and Dupont Circle and opening on 14th Street in Logan Circle. Faced with skyrocketing rents when the lease ran out in 2013, owner Andrea Pollan was forced to close her doors. This hurdle didn't deter her, however, and today